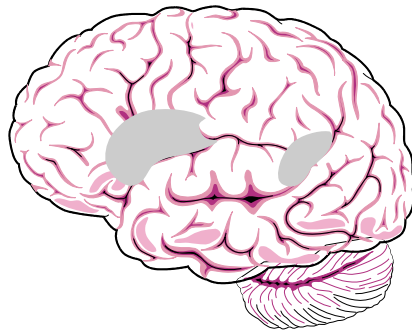




INFORMATION PAGE

Why is Forming Sounds and Words so Difficult?

Brain injury or stroke can hurt the part of the brain that controls talking, and can lead to **dysarthria**. It causes the muscles in the face, mouth and neck to become weak. Many times, these muscles are only affected on one side of the body.



A person with dysarthria has trouble saying sounds and words clearly. It is hard to understand them because their speech may sound slurred, muffled or breathy.

Common symptoms of dysarthria:

- Difficulty making certain sounds
- Difficulty saying whole words or sentences clearly
- Speech that sounds slurred, muffled or breathy
- Speech that is too soft or too loud



If I had dysarthria, what would it feel like?

- I can no longer talk clearly to express myself.
- I know what I want to say but I cannot make the sound clearly.
- I feel that my words get better when I practice with my speech therapist.
- I feel that people treat me like a child when I do not answer right away.

If I had dysarthria, what would I need to do?

- I need to speak slowly and think about each word.
- I need to exaggerate the sound to make it clear.
- I need to pay close attention to my speech sounds. It is tough!
- I need to practice. My speech will improve the most in the early months after the injury.

Would I have other communication problems related to dysarthria?

- Some people with dysarthria have no other communication problems.
- I may have trouble following directions and answering questions.
- It can be hard for me to remember the word I want to say.
- It may be difficult to pay attention to things happening around me.
- I may have trouble swallowing.

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Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

Communication Disorders Department • 7601 E. Imperial Hwy. • Downey, CA 90242

Phone: 562-401-7682 • Fax: 562-401-6690 • <http://www.rancho.org>

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Will speech therapy help me with these problems?

Therapy for dysarthria will be different for each person. A special program for each person will be developed focusing on the following:

- Making the muscles stronger so they move better.
- Practicing how you can change the way you talk.
- Developing a home program to practice with your family and friends.



As a family member or friend, what can I do to help my loved one who has dysarthria?

- Remind the person to talk slowly.
- Ask the person to exaggerate each sound in the word.
- Give the person extra time to talk.
- Ask the person to repeat words you don't understand.
- Ask the person to spell or write words you don't understand.
- Give them word choices when you don't understand.
- Encourage them to point to objects or gesture the word.
- Provide pictures for the person to point to for basic needs.
- Be positive and patient with your family member.
- Do not talk down to your loved one or treat him/her like a child.



Additional Information:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
(800) 638-8255 (Toll Free)
(301) 897-5700 (Voice or TTY)
<http://www.asha.org> (Internet)

Disclaimer: This information is for health educational purposes only. If you have questions, you should ask your doctor, nurse, or other persons who you see for your health care needs. Each clinician caring for the patient is responsible to determine the most appropriate care.

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